

GATES
WASHINGTON

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The chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee rejected Friday a request by a public interest group to release recent testimony on the Iran arms-Contra aid scandal by Robert Gates, nominated to be CIA director.

Sen. David Boren, D-Okla., responding to a Feb. 11 request by Common Cause, said Senate rules prohibit him from releasing Gates' testimony to the Intelligence Committee "without action by the full committee."

Gates, who testified Dec. 4 before the panel on the sale of U.S. arms to Iran and the diversion of sales profits to the Contra rebels, was nominated Feb. 2 to replace the recuperating William Casey as the nation's top spy.

Gates is now the agency's deputy director.

The Intelligence Committee has scheduled a Feb. 17 hearing on Gates' nomination. Common Cause, which has taken no position on the appointment, asked the panel to make public the Dec. 4 testimony before Tuesday's hearing.

Although Boren said he could not comply, he said in a statement, "I am committed to a full airing of all issues that would bear on his qualifications to serve as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, including the issues he addressed in his Dec. 4 testimony."

Common Cause did not have any immediate comment.